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9 August 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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No
25X6 Lebanon: General Shihab has said he hopes the United States will not make more than a token withdrawal of American forces in Lebanon until the peace and security of the country have been assured. Despite his public statements favoring early departure of the Americans, the general says [redacted] he wishes to use any exodus as a bargaining point to extract concessions from opposition leaders. 25X1

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25X1 Tunisia: President Bourguiba may lose the support of Tunisia's principal labor leader, Ahmed ben Salah, who is also secretary of health and social affairs. This leader and the other labor union officials who held government posts are considering resigning because of their dissatisfaction with the lack of progress on land reform, unemployment problems, and promulgating a constitution. (Page 3) 25X1

Laos: Government authority is breaking down in some rural areas. Some officials have resigned because they fear the growing strength of the Communist-dominated Neo Lao Hak Zat (NLHZ) party. 25X1

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If the situation is allowed to deteriorate further, it may lead to a military solution imposed by the army and crown. 25X1

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India - Pakistan: Increased tension and troop activity on both sides of the East Pakistani - Indian border have resulted in new shooting incidents. These incidents may be attempts to influence a meeting between Indian and Pakistani officials scheduled for 23 August on the border and related issues. Border clashes and mutual recriminations will probably continue for the time being, but both governments have shown a desire to keep such incidents localized.

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Tunisian Labor Union Leaders May Pull Out of Government

Tunisia's popular labor leader, Ahmed ben Salah, secretary of state for health and social affairs and former head of the dominant Neo-Destour - affiliated trade union, the Tunisian General Union of Labor (UGTT), is reported dissatisfied with internal developments and may leave the government. He is disappointed with the government's lack of progress toward land reform, reducing unemployment, and promulgating a constitution. If he resigns, other UGTT officials would also leave, among whom are the secretaries of state for agriculture, commerce and industry, and education, youth, and sports, and the under secretary for information.

Ben Salah and his cohorts might form a labor party in opposition to Bourguiba's Neo-Destour party, thereby ending the quasi-one-party political system in Tunisia. Such a break seems unlikely, however, while Bourguiba is hospitalized following surgery on 8 August.

Bourguiba in late 1956 forced Ben Salah to resign as head of the UGTT because he feared him as a potential political rival and because he felt Ben Salah's economic views were discouraging foreign investment. Ben Salah, who is described as an anti-Communist Marxist, was advocating nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture. Ben Salah was partially restored to favor by the following July and accepted the comparatively minor post of secretary of state for health when the Tunisian Republic was founded. He proved an exceptionally able administrator and was rewarded with the additional portfolio of social affairs in the minor cabinet reshuffle last May.

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Government Authority Disintegrating in Laos

General Ouane, chief of staff of the Laotian Army, predicts a nationwide breakdown in government authority within three to four months unless the present trend is reversed. He told an American official on 5 August that royal government officials in remote areas are resigning out of fear of the growing strength of the Communist-dominated Neo Lao Hak Zat (NLHZ). Members of the auto-defense force--special part-time volunteers--stationed in outlying areas are turning in their arms in increasing numbers, commenting that the royal government is not strong enough to protect them. Ouane was depressed over the continuation of the cabinet crisis and stated that he would not wait much longer before using the army to set up an anti-Communist government.

After its success in the 4 May supplementary elections, the NLHZ stepped up its propaganda activities in the villages and began an all-out campaign to discredit royal government officials throughout the provinces. This campaign is apparently meeting with success, [redacted]

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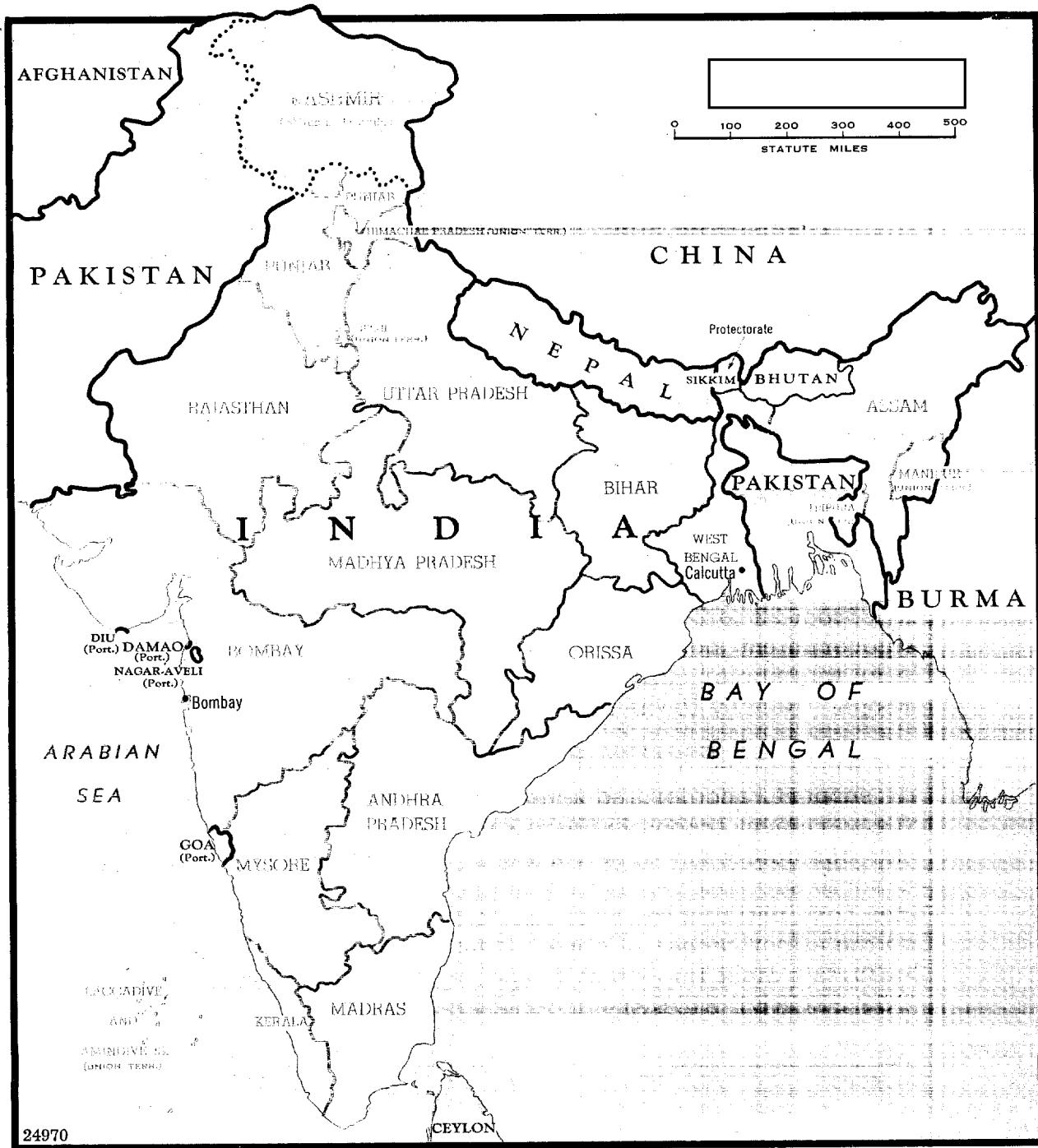
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Indian-Pakistani Border Incidents

Increased tension and troop activity on both sides of the East Pakistani - Indian border have resulted in a new shooting incident. The Pakistani Foreign Ministry on 7 August handed the Indian high commissioner a note demanding that India withdraw its forces from territory inside the Pakistani border. India has rejected the Pakistani charges, and the Indian press is accusing Pakistan of aggression. Border clashes and mutual recriminations will probably increase as each side tries to provoke the other while strengthening its own position and as both governments try publicly to put the onus of violence on the other. Both governments, however, have shown a desire to keep such incidents localized.

The present series of border shooting incidents, which began in March, may have been stimulated at least in part by Pakistan's use of troops to halt smuggling into India. Pakistan on 3 August sealed the border with Tripura, an Indian union territory, cutting off Indian transit traffic crossing East Pakistan to that territory. Recently, India and Pakistan have moved to reinforce police and military units near the border, and local hostilities may increase further.

Border incidents have accompanied the chronic dispute over the undemarcated sections of the eastern and western borders since partition in 1947. These and related border problems are to be dealt with at a conference of senior officials from both countries scheduled for 23 August, but it is unlikely that a solution satisfactory to both sides will be reached in the near future.

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